ST. MARK'S NORTHBRIDGE

CHURCH OF ENGLAND IN AUSTRALIA

The Rev. John E. Davies
Rector
Phone: 958 5794

The Rectory
17 Tunks Street
Northbridge, N.S.W. 2063

29th September, 1986

Dear Graham & Phillipa

I am writing to you because I believe you are interested in St Mark's Church, and in the role of an Anglican church in Northbridge.

St Mark's has reached a crisis point in it's history. The decline in regular attendance and in General Offertories which began in the '60's, has continued steadily with little variation, until the present. We have now reached the point where the lack of active people to carry on the normal functions of the Church, and the size of our budget deficit must cause us seriously to question whether St Mark's can continue as a separate Parish, or in fact, whether God wants an Anglican church in Northbridge at all. As one of our most active members has said in a letter to the Parish Council; if the present decrease in our congregation is allowed to continue, it "will leave us by next Annual General Meeting with not enough members to fill office and not enough money to pay our way - so St Mark's will be DEAD".

The Parish Council has decided to have a special meeting this Thursday, 2nd October to discuss the situation and to seek God's answers.

I, as Rector, am calling the Parish to prayer. We all need to be seeking God's face at this time, and asking for His wisdom to be given to our elected representatives. He has directed our attention to His promise in 2Chronicles 7:14; *"If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land."*

I will be setting aside this Thursday as a day of prayer and fasting, and I invite you to join me in the church at any time that day, that we might seek the Lord together. If you are not able to come that day, then please pray yourself at whatever time is convenient. The church is always open if you wish to use it.

This is not just a matter of rescuing a crumbling Anglican institution that may have outlived it's usefulness anyway. What is really at issue is the ongoing witness to Christ, and His love and power, in this suburb. It is the challenge of thousands of men, women and children in Northbridge who do not know Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Saviour and are therefore on their way to hell, and who do not know the transforming power of His Spirit in their lives.

The problems we face are not ones that can be solved merely by human wisdom and effort. There is a war on, a spiritual war between Christ and Satan, and Satan and his forces of darkness have a great hold over this area. False religion, the occult, the worship of the gods of materialism and humanism are widespread in our community, with their resultant fruit of broken relationships, broken homes and broken lives. I am calling upon you to join us in the battle in the Name of the Lord, and in the power of His Holy Spirit.

If you would like to discuss these matters with me, or if you have anything you would like to pass on to the Parish Council, please do not hesitate to contact me at any time.

Yours in the service of Christ, and in concern for His Church,

John Davies.

ST. MARK'S NORTHBRIDGE

ANGLICAN CHURCH

The Rev. John E. Davies
Rector
Phone: 968 6794

The Rectory
17 Tunks Street
Northbridge, N.S.W. 2063

3rd October, 1986

Dear Parishioner,

I would like to say a very special 'Thank You' to you, if you were one of those who came along to our Day of Prayer and Fasting yesterday, or who prayed for us by yourself. It was truely a most incredible day. From 7 am in the morning until after 7 pm at night there was a steady stream of people coming into the church to pray. One lady even came from Caringbah to pray with us. Some prayed by themselves in the pews, others joined me in the chancel, but all of us met with God, and God met with us. I have never known a day like it in 20 years of ministry. God spoke to us in many different ways, and some of those who came to pray received an unexpected blessing as the Holy Spirit came upon them, and ministered to their deeper needs.

As one consequence of yesterday's experience, I have decided to spend every Friday morning in the Church, to pray with with any who wish to join me, and to minister to any who want to receive more of God's blessings.

The major consequence of yesterday's time of prayer, however, and the main object of our gathering, was that the blessing of God was very much upon the Parish Council as it met last night. Differences of opinion were aired honestly and frankly, and discussed in an atmosphere of love. The major options open to us in the present situation were faced squarely. And in the end we were able to agree unanimously that it is the will of God that an Anglican Church should continue in Northbridge. As one warden observed, the consequences of that decision are scarey, because it will require a deeper level of commitment by all concerned. Yet we believe that this is God's will, and we must be obedient.

We were given a number of very encouraging messages from God during our time of prayer yesterday. One was a picture of Northbridge as a 'concrete jungle', all grey and cold and lifeless, but added on to that picture there came hanging baskets of flowers, and garden plots of flowers, bringing colour and beauty and life. These were the people of God, spread throughout the community. Another prophecy related to the two houses that have been demolished in Coolawin Rd, to make way for a new mansion. The Lord said that that is a picture of what He has been doing at St Mark's. The old has been demolished in order to make way for the new that is far more magnificent. This may be lamented by those who like the old things and want them to stay as they were, but that is not God's way. He is constantly moving on, and if we do not move with Him, we may find ourselves as we began; "without God and without hope in the world."(Eph.2:12)

One disturbing consequence of my first letter was the discovery that there are some members of the Parish who do not believe in the existence of the devil. This is serious, not only because it is contrary to the clear teaching of the Bible and the church, but also because it places them in great danger of Satan's attack. I have written more of this in the Church News.

There is still much to be done. The Parish Council recognises the seriousness of the task, and will be meeting more regularly, beginning next Friday, to consider what must be done in restructuring the management of the Church and improving communication, and what needs to be done to get our Services flowing properly. We believe that if we get ourselves right in these things then the blessing of God will come upon us, and He will provide the people and finance that we need to remain a viable church. Please continue to pray for us, that we will be obedient to the leading of God.

I have appreciated very much the comments that have come to me as a result of my first letter. Please feel free to pass on any further thoughts you may have about our Church here in Northbridge.

Yours in the service of Christ,

John Davies.